



City of Pontiac, Michigan

Office of the Mayor
Clarence E. Phillips

June 21, 2006

Representative Brian Palmer, Chair
House Education Committee
885 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Representative Palmer:

On behalf of the great City of Pontiac and Pontiac School District, I am writing to encourage you to vote **"No"** on House Bill 4085, legislation to facilitate the transfer of territory and, by extension, homesteads and resources, from one school district to another.

First, this draconian legislation is unnecessary. Indeed, the Michigan Board of Education already has established processes to permit such transfers to promote child safety and welfare. A group of homeowners in Pontiac School District, which is the real target of House Bill 4085, has petitioned the state board several times for said relief and been denied because the reason behind their request failed to meet that threshold.

House Bill 4085 also is unnecessary because individuals know upfront what school district their homestead is located in when they purchase a home. It is not a clandestine proposition. Furthermore, educational choice nowadays is bountiful, not scarce. There are schools of choice, private schools, charter schools and home schools. Some public school districts near my beloved city, such as Bloomfield Hills Public Schools, even accept tuition. For a homeowner to suggest that they have no option in where they send their child to school today flies in the face of stark reality.

House Bill 4085 also instigates fiscal instability in Pontiac School District, which enrolls some 11,000 Michigan school children – this, at a time when all governmental agencies already are forced to do more with less because of limited state resources.

Last but certainly not least, this legislation promotes division and confusion rather than cooperation and working in the spirit of collegiality. School districts have made significant headway over the last 50 years to become more diverse and inclusive. That benefits **ALL** students. House Bill 4085 sets us back by moving toward re-segregation of schools. This is plain wrong and foolhardy.

I will not belabor the point, but suffice it to say, House Bill 4085 represents bad public policy. Please vote **"No"** on this legislation, and call me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of my sentiment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Clarence E. Phillips".

Clarence E. Phillips, Mayor
City of Pontiac

Cc: Members of the House Education Committee